corporations constituted by State Government either as 'direct/ indirect priority sector lending'.

Reduction in Central Excise Duty on Cigarettes

1675. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether tobacco farmers are demanding reduction in Central excise duty on cigarettes and waiver of interest on bank loans; and

(b) if so, what is the Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) Representation was received from the Tobacco Growers for reduction of excise duty including removal of National Calamity Contingent Duty, which is a duty of excise, on cigarettes. The same was examined but not found acceptable.

As regards waiver of interest on bank loans, information is being collected.

FDI in Private Sector Banks

1676. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that RBI has notified to allow 49 per cent FDI in private sector banks in the country; and

(b) if so, whether the portfolio investment in these banks by Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) will be within the FDI limit of 49 per cent or outside?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.